

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claims 1-8 to read as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus for carrying out the a printing operation by using printing means for ejecting ink, comprising:

recovery means for recovering ~~the~~ an ink ejection state of the printing means ~~in a favorable state~~ by receiving ink from the printing means; and

ink-retaining means for absorbing and retaining the ink received in ~~the~~ said recovery means and discharged from a discharging portion thereof through a flow passage~~[[;]]~~,

wherein said recovery means and said ink-retaining means are disposed approximately at the same height when said ink-jet printing apparatus is in ~~the posture to be used~~ a use orientation, and ~~said the~~ flow passage is formed as a sealed space except for portions connected to ~~said the~~ discharging portion of said recovery means and to said ink-retaining means~~[[;]]~~, ~~said the~~ flow passage being provided with an absorber while remaining maintaining a gap between walls of the flow passage and the absorber and extending from ~~said the~~ discharging portion to said ink-retaining means.

2. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said ink-retaining means ~~has~~ comprises a container sealed except for portions ~~to be~~ connected to ~~said the~~ flow passage and ~~communicated~~ communicating with outer air, and ~~an a container~~ absorber accommodated in said container.

3. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein a continuous space is formed between the portions ~~to be~~ connected to ~~said the~~ flow passage and ~~communicated~~ communicating with outer air; ~~said air, the space passing by the~~ extending along an outer surface of ~~said accommodated the container~~ absorber accommodated in the interior of said container.

4. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein ~~said the~~ continuous space is connected to and contiguous ~~to said with the~~ gap of ~~said the~~ flow passage at a the portion connected to ~~said the~~ flow passage.

5. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein ~~said the~~ continuous space is formed to ~~be narrower~~ narrow from the portion connected to ~~said the~~ flow passage to the portion ~~communicated~~ communicating with outer air.

6. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein ~~said~~ the absorber disposed in ~~said~~ the flow passage is connected to ~~said~~ the container absorber accommodated in said container.

7. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the flow passage is integral with said recovery means.

8. (Currently Amended) An ink-jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein said recovery means comprises a pump for forcibly expelling ink by ~~the~~ application of a suction force to an ink-ejection portion of ~~said~~ the printing means, and ~~said~~ the flow passage is integral with a base for supporting said pump to connect a discharging port of said pump with said ink-retaining means.